



Manitoba Farmers' UNION

Handbook and *Action Guide*



For
FARMERS' UNION LODGES

FARMERS' UNION CREED

Because I know that as an individual I am nothing, but banded with my brother farmer I am power—I pledge the work of my hands, the fruit of my soil and the loyalty of my heart to the Farmers' Union.

I will keep my eyes on the goal and let no petty annoyances make me forget it.

I will attend my local meetings and let no personal animosities keep me from mingling with my neighbors for our common good.

And I will always remember, that greater than any man in it—worthy of any sacrifice—deserving of all faithfulness, is the Union itself, built for me and by me—my own organization.

Farmers' Union Handbook



WHAT ARE THE PURPOSES OF THE FARMERS' UNION?

The objective of the Manitoba Farmers' Union is to improve the welfare of families who earn their living by tilling the soil. To do this there must be peace, democracy and abundance for all people. Neither farmers as a group, nor Manitoba as a province, can be isolated on a little island of plenty while other groups suffer. The purposes of the Manitoba Farmers' Union are set forth in detail in the Constitution and By-laws as follows:

To forward the interests of the farmers in any honorable and legitimate way.

To promote the interests of its members by suggesting suitable legislation and to make appropriate representations to the Legislature or to Parliament in order that such suggestions may be reflected in legislation.

To promote co-operative buying and selling among its members and to carry on and exercise any power of trade or business as the Union may deem advisable within the limits of the authority conferred on it by the Act of Incorporation or any amendments thereto.

To work with any organization in Canada having similar objectives.

The Union is non-political, non-commercial and no-sectarian.

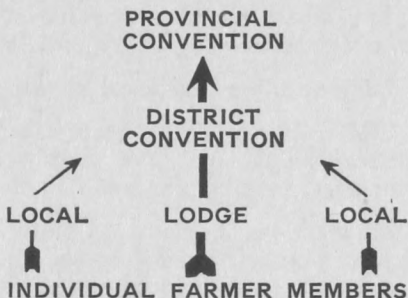


WHAT IS THE STRUCTURE OF THE FARMERS' UNION?

The basis of the whole Farmers Union is the individual farm family which when joined with other farm families in the community, form a Farmers' Union Local. A local lodge may be formed when six or more persons have joined the Union.

These local lodges are important units within the Farmers' Union. They are composed of farm families, that meet periodically in homes, schools or halls of the country communities. In slack times meetings can be held monthly if desired by the local people. This local meeting place is where farm families can make their voices heard in discussions and can take action on farm programs. The local meeting can also be the place for holding good times in the community. Neighbors gather together, and after their business meeting talk, and have lunch together. The rural community has been fast disappearing. The Farmers' Union Local Lodge is the one social device that can hold it together.

It is at the local meeting that the members exchange ideas, hold discussions on legislation and co-operatives, and determine the policies that eventually become the program of your District and Provincial Farmers' Union. The Local Lodge is the tool which farm families can use to act on community, district and provincial problems.



The local lodges send delegates to the district and provincial conventions where problems relative to agriculture are discussed and policies formed that dictate the direction of the Manitoba Farmers' Union.

WHAT ARE THE DUTIES OF LOCAL OFFICIALS?

President

The president is elected by the members of the local lodge to see that the lodge is active

and effective. To do the job required, the president should:

- (a) Go over the duties with each officer in the lodge to make sure they understand just what they are (these are listed in this handbook).
- (b) Call an executive meeting of the local lodge once a month if possible . . . about two weeks before the regular meeting.
- (c) Chair executive and local meetings.
- (d) DON'T BOSS the program director and other officials, but give them any ideas that come to mind for building the local.
- (e) Start meetings on time . . . many a meeting has been ruined because "Jack" or "Mary" has not arrived yet so the president waits until they arrive. Start on time and members will make an effort to arrive on time when they realize 8 o'clock means 8 o'clock.
- (f) Use parliamentary procedure at meetings but don't let it become burdensome or allow it to stifle discussion. Parliamentary law is meant to help rather than hinder progress. Be fair but limit discussion where necessary. Close on time.
- (g) Work closely with district and provincial officials. Tie the strength of your

local lodge to that of other lodges to build a strong district and provincial union.

- (h) Work with other groups. As head of the local lodge the President is the public relations man. He should contact church, business, labor and civic groups when issues arise on which a working agreement can be reached. He should tell other groups about the Farmers' Union. Represent and promote the Union whenever and wherever possible.



Vice-President

The Vice-President should be capable of doing any of the jobs required of the President, in his absence. Consequently it would be a waste of ability if he did not carry a big part of the work right along, even though the president isn't absent. He should:

- (a) Preside at meetings in the absence of the President.
- (b) Help the President with any and all of his duties regularly. Perhaps the public relations work can be divided between the President and the Vice-President.
- (c) Help the President direct other officials in their work.

- (d) Perhaps do double duty — act as one of the Directors as well as be Vice-President.
- (e) Carry out special jobs when necessary— such as chairing a special committee.

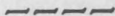


Secretary-Treasurer

This may be divided by two persons but is usually handled by one. This is the person elected by the lodge to see that the business of the local functions efficiently. He should be a good person to put in charge of funds and all the official records. To carry on this work he should:

- (a) Notify executive members of all meetings and all members of local lodge meetings. This can be done in several ways — notice in the paper — a post card dropped in the mail — general circuit rings over rural telephone lines, etc.
- (b) Take minutes of all meetings. Executive, regular and special lodge meetings, and read them at the following meeting. (Minutes should record what is done, what action is taken. They need not be a long report covering all the discussion that takes place).
- (c) Keep membership records, financial reports and send whatever reports and dues are necessary to the provincial office.

- (d) Send names and addresses of the lodge executive to the head office of the Union at Winnipeg.
- (e) Answer and report all correspondence directed by the local lodge.
- (f) Order supplies and materials needed by the lodge.
- (g) Read and save all letters from head office.
- (h) Unless the lodge has a person appointed to look after publicity the secretary must notify the public and members of the work of the local by sending reports of meetings, visiting speakers, social activities, etc., to local paper, the Union paper. Women lodges are requested to send reports direct to the women's editor of the Union paper.

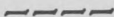


Organization Director

This person is the one who sees that the local lodge keeps working to increase membership. He should:

- (a) Attend executive meetings and see that an annual organization drive is planned.
- (b) Discuss with the lodge new ideas for bringing in new members and making old members active.
- (c) Check with the Secretary-treasurer at

regular intervals to get the names of members who have not paid their dues. Divide the list among active members, assign a few names to each to see, collect dues, and bring to next local lodge meeting.



Education Director

It is suggested that one person be appointed to this job. He will be responsible to see that members of the local get the facts on problems they are concerned with. He should:

- (a) Attend executive meetings and help decide what question is to be discussed at regular meetings. If additional information is necessary he should write to head office, government officials, etc.
- (b) He might arrange for an educational movie or a speaker to be invited to discuss important issues. Perhaps three or four members of the lodge can present a panel discussion on a topic of interest to the farmer and the farmer's wife. This could be followed by a general discussion. See that members have time to ask questions and talk over the problem until everyone understands it well.
- (c) Bring educational material to the attention of members. Show or tell them of new pamphlets, articles, etc., they might like to read.

Legislative Director

This person's job is to see that the elected representatives in the Federal and Provincial legislatures who represent the farmers in their home area know what the farm electors are thinking. He should:

- (a) Attend all executive meetings.
- (b) In case of an emergency when a bill is before parliament write or wire your representative as your lodge wishes it.
- (c) At local meetings report on important legislation and how their representatives voted on legislation they are interested in. This is not to stir up a political controversy but to keep interest up.



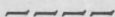
Recreation and Program Director

This person is the one who sees that the members have a good time to top off the good work that is done at a meeting. He should:

- (a) Attend all executive meetings, and discuss with the group plans for recreation at the next regular meeting, work with the Junior leader to arrange for juniors to assist.
- (b) Discuss with the executive ideas for special recreation projects to be brought up to the local for ratification such as picnics, parties, etc. Perhaps neighboring lodges can be invited to attend.
- (c) Write to the provincial office and ask

to be placed on the mailing list for any program suggestions they may be sending out from time to time.

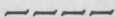
- (d) Take charge of refreshments or see that someone else is responsible — have members take a turn at this — don't ask the same good-natured woman to do it all the time.
- (e) See that new members are made to feel at home.



Women's Leader

Our women must have an active part in the local lodge. The Women's Leader should:

- (a) Attend executive meetings.
- (b) See that women come to meetings and take an active part.
- (c) Encourage separate women's activities, such as social gatherings, visiting bereaved families, ill stricken members, etc.
- (d) Encourage joint action with other women's organizations within your district in any promotion of educational and charitable work.



Junior Leader

This should be either a young person or someone who is interested in this type of work. Our young people must have an active part in the local lodges. The Junior Leader should:

- (a) Attend executive meetings.
- (b) See that young people in the district take an active part in the meetings — skits, recitations, panel discussions and taking the lead in games, singing and folk dancing.
- (c) Report to the lodge about local junior activities and provincial activities. The importance of junior work should be stressed so parents will be encouraged to bring their families to meetings.
- (d) Work with other young people's organizations in the community on joint projects.



Publicity

Some lodges may prefer to have someone else do this instead of the secretary. If so make sure the whole community knows of the activities of your lodge. See to it that non-members know of the lodge's stand on important issues. Take or send regular news items to the local paper and other papers before and after a meeting.

The item before a meeting should tell WHERE and WHEN the meeting will be held, and outline the program — the issues to be discussed, and other major items. The one after the meeting will tell what action was taken at the meeting, which was held when and where.

Send important news items to your local radio stations.

Invite the editor of your local paper to the local lodge meeting for special occasions.

Send items to your own paper 'The Union Farmer.' In addition to regular news stories, special features might be written occasionally about the local, interesting and unusual facts about its officers, members, history and activities.

Family Organization

Farming is not the job of one member of the family. It requires the work of the father, mother, the son and daughter. Doing housework, tending the garden, caring for chickens bringing in the wood and water, milking the cows, and doing all the chores around the farm are just as important as riding the tractor, driving the combine or truck. It is all part of making a home on the land for the farm family.

The Farmers' Union recognizes the fact that the whole family has a stake in its security on the land and therefore our organization is not one for men alone. There is a place in it for every member of the family. The rural community with its social gatherings, its unity of feeling, its neighborliness, has been disappearing. The Farmers' Union with its social features is the one device which farm people have to maintain a rich rural culture and build security on the land for farm families.

What An Active Lodge Should Do

1. Hold regular meetings.
2. Start on time.
3. Good attendance by members.
4. Have executive meetings to plan lodge meetings.
5. Have elected officials take part in meeting reports, etc.
6. Have separate women's activities in your lodge for your women members.
7. Have junior members active in your local lodge in separate junior group.
8. Balanced meetings of business, education, entertainment, recreation.
9. Take part in district and provincial conventions by sending delegates.
10. Join with neighboring lodges in Sports Days, Picnics, etc.
11. Carry on annual membership drive.
12. Maintain close contact with district and provincial officials.

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